



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

April 8, 2022

The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones
Speaker of the House of Delegates
H-101 State House
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Speaker Jones:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have vetoed House Bill 609 - *Local Health Officers - Removal - Process*.

Our local health officers and health departments are a critical part of the state's public health system, which is rightly regarded as one of the best in the country. Maryland continues to be a national leader in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and our local health officers deserve to be commended for their selfless and tireless leadership.

However, House Bill 609 creates dangerous precedent and significantly undermines the voters and the Maryland Constitution, which entrusts the executive branch with making appointments to critical government roles.

This bill will make local health officers unique and separate from all other state appointees by establishing specific and arbitrary criteria which must be considered prior to their removal. Currently, all appointees, including local health officers, serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority. House Bill 609 will establish personnel standards for local health officers that significantly differ from similar positions in State government.

For these reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 609 - *Local Health Officers - Removal - Process*

Sincerely,

Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor